

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

## West Virginia Mountaineers

**Bob Huggins**

**Erik Stevenson**

**Kedrian Johnson**

**Tre Mitchell**

Postgame Press Conference

Texas Tech 62 - West Virginia 78

MODERATOR: Okay. We've got the West Virginia Mountaineers on the dais right now. We have the West Virginia players, Kedrian Johnson, Tre Mitchell, Erik Stevenson. They're available for questions that you might have from them.

**Q. Erik, a little bit of a slower start shooting the ball, but you hit those two threes out of the under 12 media timeout. How important was that to get things rolling in the right direction offensively for you guys?**

ERIK STEVENSON: I think it's always good for our team to see myself and Tre and Kedy and Emmitt make some shots early. It wasn't as early as I would like, but I mean, I didn't really take a whole lot of shots in that first ten-minute stretch. So it was good to see those two go in and sadly cooled off a little bit, which is frustrating, but, yeah, it's good to give a little spark for my team, you know, because we need it.

**Q. Tre, it seemed like rebounding was kind of an issue against these guys the last time, and it was an emphasis tonight. What led to that success on the boards and how happy were you with the performance of the team in that facet of the game?**

TRE MITCHELL: We knew it was a key piece to the game. I didn't know the mic was that good. My bad. But we knew it was a key piece of the game because when we played at Tech, we killed them on the glass, we won. Played them at West Virginia, they beat us on the glass, they won. So that was a point of emphasis for us. So we



knew going into it that as long as we controlled that area of the game, then we were going to be fine.

**Q. You guys had 21 turnovers the last time you were in Lawrence and today you have nine. What are you guys thinking about looking at tomorrow with a chance. So what are you guys thinking about looking at tomorrow with a chance to win with it 1 last time you played these guys. Now tomorrow you go in after controlling the ball pretty well today. Does that help you confidence wise or what, Tre?**

TRE MITCHELL: That's another key element to the game. You gotta take care of the ball. And you said we had 21 last time, but nine today. So as long as we take care of the ball like that, we can beat anybody, for sure.

**Q. Kedrian, Emmitt said yesterday the biggest key to the game was guard, guard, guard, guard, guard. You guys hold them to 23 percent shooting from the field, 21 from three in the second half. What was the biggest key defensively to slowing this team down?**

MR. JOHNSON: Making rotations and having ball pressure at all times. Feel like we're going to end up always scoring the ball. It just comes to defensive end for us.

MODERATOR: We'll excuse the players to the locker room. Floor is open for questions for Coach Huggins.

**Q. Coach, it seems like you guys are playing the best basketball that you have all season to this point. Would you agree with that and what's been the biggest kind of key down the stretch?**

BOB HUGGINS: Well, our turnovers are down. We're rebounding the ball better. I think we know each other better. I think we're making plays now that we couldn't make early because we thought they were going to zig and they zagged, you know. And I think now we understand a little better each other.

**Q. Coach, how big was rebounding in this game? You all didn't win that margin by much, but seems like you**



**guys got the important rebounds when they needed to be gotten?**

BOB HUGGINS: It's always big. Anytime you can get more possessions, be it an offensive rebound, be it a steal, be it a forcing the turnover, the key is getting the ball back.

**Q. I'm not positive which game it was after. It might have been at TCU where it seemed like you were questioning the leadership of some of your guys and that will to win and that killer instinct?**

BOB HUGGINS: Who, me doing that? No, come on.

**Q. Do you think you guys have found that now?**

BOB HUGGINS: Keydy has always been a leader. Keydy is what a six-year guy, I think, because of the COVID. So he's been a great leader for us. He's been a great leader. Erik's been a really good leader as well. We've got a lot of upperclassmen, I think, that they know this is it, and they want to make a run. And so they're trying to help the younger guys certainly get better and do the right things.

**Q. Coach, quick turn around coming up against Kansas tomorrow. What's the most important thing for the players to do over the next 12 hours or so while they get ready for that game. And what's the biggest take away from the most recent meeting in Lawrence?**

BOB HUGGINS: Probably much the same as what you guys will do. They'll go in there and answer a bunch more questions and then they'll go get in the cold tub like I'm sure you guys will after the performance you put on today. Jump in that cold tub as soon as you get back to the hotel. You're familiar with that, aren't you? That's what I figured. Yeah.

**Q. Coach, one more for you. Jim Boeheim announced his retirement today. Just thoughts on a coach you used to battle in the Big East, and thoughts on Jim.**

BOB HUGGINS: Well, honestly, I'm surprised. You know, he's a basketball diehard, and he was coaching when I was playing. And we talk about that occasionally, you know. I made two free throws actually to put him away. So we talk about that occasionally. He's a great guy. He's an absolutely great guy. He's a fun guy to be around. I think a lot of times people misunderstand what a really good guy he is and his humor. And he's had an absolutely incredible career from being a player at Syracuse to what he's done and what he's won, what thousands and thousands of games. That's hard to do. It's hard to do, and it's hard to stay at the top like he has certainly.

**Q. It also makes you No. 1 on the career victory list among active coaches. Do you have a thought on that?**

BOB HUGGINS: Honestly, I don't think about those things, unless I come in here and listen to you guys, and then I -- you know, I don't know. I mean, my dad was a coach. My dad was probably the most successful high school coach in the history of Ohio basketball, and he never really -- I mean, people would say and he'd say, I don't know anything about it, you know. And probably honestly he didn't. He didn't really pay any attention. He didn't care. I don't know. Means I'm old, I guess. Getting older anyway. I'm not old. I'm getting older. How's that?

MODERATOR: No questions on Zoom. Coach, thank you very much.

BOB HUGGINS: I'm going to go jump in that ice bath and get ready for tomorrow. How's that?

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